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who practise in Secundrabad and Hyderabad, and a few even go to the well-equipped hospitals for prolonged treatment of difficult and persistent diseases. However, for the majority of the population the only medicines used for ordinary ailments are the inexpensive indigenous herbs and drugs which are locally available.

The local post office, under one of the village schoolmasters, serves Shamirpet and a large number of adjoining villages. The system of mail distribution in the countryside is very defective. Often the village postman takes a month or even more to reach a village on his periodic rounds. Letters are generally delivered personally to people who come to the post office for them, or they are handed to a co-villager who happens to visit the post office, for further transmission.

The police station at Shamirpet is in charge of a sub-inspector and has a strength of two head constables and twelve constables. This force is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the villages under its jurisdiction. The police keep an eye on all doubtful characters, organize regular patrols of the villages and through the subordinate officials keep themselves informed of local developments. Their official records register all births and deaths, which must be reported by the inhabitants of the village.

As the tank is more than a mile from the village, the people use well water for domestic purposes. In respect of wells, Shamirpet has been very unlucky. Out of a total of thirty-three wells within the village limits, there are only three which yield good, drinkable water, the water of all other wells being brackish and unpalatable. Most people are therefore able to use sweet water only for drinking and cooking, whilst clothes and household utensils are washed in brackish water. The outlying wards of the Malas and Madigas are more fortunate in this respect, for their wells, situated at a distance of about half a mile from their respective colonies, yield 'sweet' water. In the summer months there is often an acute scarcity of drinking water in the village, and at this time large crowds of women gather at the few sweet-water wells waiting patiently to fill their many brass and earthen pots. This time of enforced waiting is spent in gossiping, in exchanging news and often in relating the latest scandals.

The sanitation of the village is the responsibility of the Yetti Madigas, whose traditional duty it is to sweep the street and lanes; in return for the service, the government grants them the use of certain rent-free lands. 27

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and functions to agents who acted for him. Now he gets a certain percentage of the total revenue collected in the village in lieu of the rent-free land. Thus, theoretically, the Deshmukh is both Mali Patel and Police Patel; but in actual practice these duties are carried out by his agents. In the capacity as Mali Patel of the village the Deshmukh takes steps to ensure the speedy collection of land revenue after each harvest and remits it to the district treasury. The Patwari can seek his assistance in matters connected with the land records and revenue of the village. For this he gets annually 5% of the total land revenue collected in the village. As Police Patel the Deshmukh is entitled to receive another 5% of the revenue collected during the year. In this capacity he has to send regular reports to the police regarding the occurrence of any crime in the village, keep an eye on the 'bad characters' and watch the activities of suspicious strangers. He maintains records of births and deaths in the village. It is his duty to assist the police in all possible ways in their investigations regarding criminal offences in the village. The other officials, such as the sub-inspector of police, head constables, constables and schoolmasters, are not a permanent part of the local population, and as such they do not generally get mixed up in local politics and other affairs. The police officials enjoy both prestige and power and are, in general, greatly feared by the people.

The Patwari, in spite of the fact that he is a petty revenue and land records official, occupies a pivotal position in the village and plays a very significant part in local politics. Being in charge of the land records, he can manipulate things both to the advantage and disadvantage of landowners, who often consult him and ask his advice. Of Patwaris in general it is said, 'What will they not do for a consideration? Give them money and they will prove their own father a bastard.' The present Patwari of Shamirpet is, for one in his position, a man of more than average intelligence and is himself a careful and substantial cultivator who owns some 247 acres of land jointly with his brother. He receives no salary from the government, nor does he have any rent-free land, but a certain percentage of the total land revenue is fixed by the government as his remuneration for the work.

All villages in Hyderabad State, as do most of those of middle and peninsular India, have a number of village menials. Their functions in the internal organization of the village are of two